



## LESSON I.—OCTOBER 2.

## Elisha Succeeds Elijah.

II. Kings ii., 12-22.

## Golden Text.

Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. II. Kings ii., 9.

## Home Readings.

Monday, Sept. 26.—II. Kings ii., 12-22.  
 Tuesday, Sept. 27.—II. Kings ii., 1-11.  
 Wednesday, Sept. 28.—I. Kings xix., 15-21.  
 Thursday, Sept. 29.—Josh. i., 1-11.  
 Friday, Sept. 30.—Matt. iv., 18-22.  
 Saturday, Oct. 1.—Ex. xv., 20-27.  
 Sunday, Oct. 2.—Is. xli., 10-21.

12. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

13. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

14. And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

15. And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

16. And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.

17. And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.

18. And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

19. And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my Lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren.

20. And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.

21. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

22. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

(By R. M. Kurtz.)

## INTRODUCTION.

On September 11 we learned of the close of Elijah's career on earth, by his being carried into Heaven in a chariot of fire. To-day we take up the eleven verses immediately following that lesson, and dealing with the opening of the work of Elisha as the successor of Elijah.

According to the common reckoning, Elisha began his own separate work about 892 B.C., though the exact date is not known. He seems to have begun his prophet's work while Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, was still living, and in the reign of Jehoram, son of Ahab, King of Israel. He was a contemporary of four kings of Israel.

Elisha was a native of the Jordan valley, a little south of the Sea of Galilee. He was

a farmer's son, and was called to his life work while ploughing. He does not seem to have possessed the rugged, fiery nature of Elijah, but was none the less a strong character.

Ahab is now dead, but Elisha finds Israel still following after evil.

## ELISHA ASSURED.

12. 'And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.'

When Elijah was about to be taken from earth and away from his servant and disciple, Elisha, he asked what he could do for him, and Elisha had asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Elijah had not definitely promised it, but had told him that, if he saw him when he was taken away, his prayer would be granted. Our lesson opens with the granting of that prayer.

Assurance that one's course is right, that his work is acceptable, that he is saved, is not always granted in such sudden and clear a fashion as this assurance was given to Elisha. God is not restricted to a single rule in his dealings with men. To some he may grant a large knowledge and sight, others must live by faith; but in each case his grace is sufficient.

Elisha was entering upon a great and important work, and God saw fit to give him clear assurance of his fitness for it at the very outset.

Elijah had been as a spiritual father to Elisha, and in his mingled grief over separation, joy over the fulfilment of his prayer, and wonder at the scene presented, he cries, 'My father, my father,' and further, as though to express his satisfaction and assurance, he adds, 'the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.'

When the sight at last faded away, and He realized that he was alone, he rent his clothes, the usual means of expressing grief.

## HE PROVES GOD'S PRESENCE.

13. 'He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back and stood by the bank of Jordan.'

14. 'And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord the God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.'

Elisha had been given the assurance of the double portion (that of an eldest son) of Elijah's spirit, but what did that mean? could he work miracles as Elijah did? The Jordan had been divided by a miracle wrought by Elijah as the two men walked together for the last time, shortly before. Could he, too, with the mantle of the great prophet, divide its waters? He cried, and the waters parted. The God of Elijah was with him to do the works that Elijah had done.

## THE NEW MASTER ACKNOWLEDGED.

15. 'And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.'

These sons of the prophets, knowing, as we saw in the former lessons, that Elijah was about to be taken from them, had, from a distance, looked after the two prophets in their walk from Jericho to the Jordan. As they see Elisha returning alone, they see in him the prophet who is to take Elijah's place and who now becomes their own leader.

It was more than a mere notion that impelled them to exclaim that the spirit of Elijah was now upon Elisha. The spiritual vision of these men, who had foreseen that Elijah was to be taken from them that day, enabled them to perceive that the power of God that rested upon Elijah was now upon his successor.

## ONE WAY OF TREATING DOUBTS.

16. 'And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master; lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.'

17. 'And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore

fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.

18. 'And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?'

In the reason given for attempting a search for Elijah we have a peculiar case of inconsistency. These men had the foresight to know that Elijah was to be taken away, yet they could not comprehend that it was a final departure. Nor did it occur to them that, if God had thus miraculously removed his prophet to another place, Elijah would be safe and not in need of their assistance.

Elisha at first refuses to allow them to go, but seeing that, after all their reverence of him as their spiritual leader, they do not accept his word, he bids them to go and search. After wasting three days they return only to be quietly reminded of their disregard of their chief's advice.

The less one's faith and true spirituality, the more apt is he to go astray and to spend useless effort to settle doubts that should never have arisen.

## THE WATERS OF JERICHO HEALED.

19. 'And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my Lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren.'

20. 'And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.'

21. 'And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.'

22. 'So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.'

Elijah was a man of God for great emergencies and deeds; Elisha was a man of God for the more common, everyday matters of life, for the help and council of men in their ordinary affairs.

We find him in this case sought after because a spring was bad and injured the very ground it watered. Elisha takes a new cruse and salt in it, perhaps meant to typify a new nature for the water and its purity thereafter, and cast the salt into the spring, declaring it healed in the name of the Lord.

To this day travellers drink of a spring of pure water near Jericho, believed to be the very one healed at this time.

Elisha was thus both proving his God given power, and also doing good among the people. This miracle was a foreshadowing of his life work.

The lesson for October 9, is 'The Widow's Oil Increased.' II. Kings iv., 1-7.

## C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Oct. 2.—Topic—How we are in training to succeed others. Deut. xxxiv., 7-12; Josh. i., 1, 2.

## Junior C. E. Topic.

## JOSEPH'S LAST DAYS.

Monday, Sept. 26.—Joseph the governor. Gen. xlvii., 13-26.

Tuesday, Sept. 27.—Jacob's last days. Gen. xlvii., 27-31.

Wednesday, Sept. 28.—Jacob's farewell to Joseph. Gen. xlviii., 1-9.

Thursday, Sept. 29.—Blessing Joseph's sons. Gen. xlviii., 10-22.

Friday, Sept. 30.—Death of Jacob. Gen. xlix., 28-33.

Saturday, Oct. 1.—Jacob's funeral. Gen. l., 1-13.

Sunday, Oct. 2.—Topic—Joseph's last days. Gen. l., 7-26; Heb. xi., 22.

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